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JOHN R. D'ANTONIO, JR.
SECRETARY

For Immediate Release
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Hearing to Continue for State Water Quality Management Plan

(Santa Fe, NM) - On November 12, the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) decided to postpone making a decision and continue its public hearing on the proposed state Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) until December 16. John R. D'Antonio, Jr., Chairman of the WQCC, said the postponement and continuation was to provide the public and hearing participants with additional time to review documents related to the hearing.

The WQMP is a tool designed to ensure that long-range goals of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (a.k.a. Clean Water Act) are met. These goals include "restoring and maintaining the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nations waters." The WQMP establishes a process that assures continuous planning for and implementation of pollution control measures.

The public hearing on the WQMP began on October 1, 2002, continued on November 12, and will be addressed again on December 16, 2002. The hearing will consider the draft of the WQMP called the "October 1" version. This version includes substantive additions made to the prior draft. The WQCC will have the right to adopt, reject or modify the "October 1" version at its meeting.

Any person who wishes to submit a non-technical written statement in lieu of oral testimony may do so at or before the hearing. All interested persons will be given a reasonable opportunity at the hearing to

submit relevant evidence, data, views, and arguments (orally or in writing), to introduce relevant exhibits and to examine witnesses testifying at the hearing.

Two public comment periods have been allowed; one was January 18, 2002 through March 19, 2002; the most recent, August 13 through September 12. During these periods, the public was invited to provide written comments and/or provide a written request for a hearing on the matter. Informal public meetings on the WQMP were also held by the Environment Department's Surface Water Quality Bureau (SWQB) in four locations around the State (Las Cruces, Roswell, Santa Fe, and Farmington) in February of this year.

The proposed revisions to the WQMP are available upon request immediately at the SWQB, and will be posted on the SWQB's website (by November 20), which can be found at:

<<http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/swqb/swqb.html>>. For more information, contact Glenn Saums, of the SWQB, at P.O. Box 26110, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87502 or by calling (505) 827-2827 or e-mail:

<glenn_saums@nmenv.state.nm.us>.

The WQCC will again consider of the WQMP on December 16, 2002 at 9:00 am MST at the New Mexico Department of Education Mabry Hall, 300 Don Gaspar (corner of Don Gaspar and East De Vargas Street), Santa Fe, New Mexico.

For additional information, contact Zachary Shandler, WQCC Counsel, at (505) 827-6921 or Glenn Saums, Program Manager, SWQB, NMED, at (505) 827-2827 or Cathy Tyson-Foster, Communications Director, NMED, at (505) 827-0314.

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